

Virtual Special City Council Meeting
Tuesday, December 7, 2021
7:00 pm

This meeting was conducted under S. 2475, An act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency, signed on June 16, 2021

The public was able to view this meeting on:

- ACTV Channel 12
- the ACTV website: amesburyctv.org/channel-12-live
- or the ACTV Facebook Page:
www.facebook.com/AmesburyCommunityTelevision
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Copies of agenda items (first and second readings) can be found online at www.amesburyma.gov/city-council/pages/2021-council-bills

The meeting opened at 7:03pm

Members present were Councilors Hogg, Kisielewski, Lennon @7:06 pm, Mandeville, Rinaldi, Stanganelli, Wheeler, Gilday and Einson.

Councilor Einson recognized that it is Pearl Harbor day and asked for a moment of silence.

Paul Fahey noted that his last day in Amesbury will be Friday, December 10. He is going to a position in Revere and thanked the Councilors and that he enjoyed working with all of them.

Councilor Einson reviewed the instructions for public participation.

2021-146 An Order to adopt the Precinct Boundary Map as amended by the 2020 Federal Census. – Mayor Sponsor Summary: Every ten years after the Federal Census is complete, new precinct boundary lines are drawn to reflect changes in the City's population and to anticipate the needs of the City's election system for the next decade.

Councilor Lennon gave a review of the Ordinance Committee meeting and that this was sent back to the City Council with a positive recommendation.

Councilor Wheeler gave an overview of the changes: District 3 is gaining area at the southwest end. D4 is giving up some land near Lake Gardner beach, the Essex St. neighborhood; Lake Ave and Orchard St.

District 4 is getting larger at the western edge. Currently West Whitehall Rd is the boundary between districts 4 and 5. D4 will be growing along Newton Rd out to Powow Cove Ln.

District 5, the boundaries between 5 & 6 remain largely unchanged.

District 1 is growing the area of Bailey's Pond. North of 495 is currently D6 but will change to D1.

Councilor Einson asked about people in those districts that have changes and whether or not they need to change their voter registration.

City Clerk, Amanda Haggstrom stated that they will get notified of the changes to be made and as soon as the state uploads the changes they will show their district on their annual census. The census may be delayed a couple of weeks in order to do so.

Councilor Einson opened the public hearing.

Amanda stated that Mel Webster asked about notification as well and yes all will be notified.

Councilor Einson then closed the public hearing.

Councilor Wheeler moved to adopt the updated language and map circulated by Amanda on December 1, 2021.

Councilor Stanganelli seconded.

Roll call vote was taken and it was voted in favor Unanimous.

2021-147 An Order to request the City Council vote to increase the exemptions amount of qualified applicants. – Mayor Sponsor Summary: On an annual basis, the City council must vote to decide if the City of Amesbury shall increase the exemption amount of qualified applicants under the provisions of M.G.L. Councilor Stanganelli reviewed the Finance Committee referral in which they sent 2021-147 back with a positive recommendation.

Councilor Einson opened and closed the public hearing.

Councilor Stanganelli moved to accept 2021-147 as presented.

Councilor Wheeler seconded

Roll call vote was taken and it was vote in favor Unanimous.

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2021-148 An Order to request the City Council vote to hold the annual classification hearing to vote on four (4) separate items in order to establish the tax burdens for each class of property. – Mayor Sponsor Summary: On an annual basis, the City Council must vote on the issue of selecting a residential factor which will determine the percentage of the burden to be borne by each class of property.

Councilor Stanganelli reviewed the Finance Committee referral in which each item was referred individually and then all as a whole. Item 1 was referred to adopt a factor of one (1), Item 2 was referred to not adopt; Item 3 was referred to not adopt the residential exemption; Item 4 was referred to not adopt the commercial exemption. A final motion was made to adopt all four of the recommendations in its entirety.

Councilor Einson opened and closed the public hearing.

Item 1-Residential factor

Councilor Stanganelli moved to accept a factor of 1.

Councilor Hogg seconded.

Roll call vote was taken and it was voted in favor Unanimous.

Item 2- Open Space discount – do not adopt

Councilor Stanganelli moved to not accept an Open Space discount.

Councilor Gilday seconded.

Councilor Lennon stated that she feels by not offering the discount, even though at this time we don't have any qualifying applicants for this discount we are in a way preventing any future qualifying applicants to pursue that discount. It takes a bargaining chip off the table when the Planning Board and the Planning Department is working with developers to try to promote the use of an open space plan for the purposes of tax breaks. She feels it is helpful for the city to keep all of its options open in terms of making it possible to acquire land and protect land as part of new developments. One way we can do that is to make that exemption available.

Councilor Wheeler asked the Assessor, Todd Laramie if we were to offer a residential exemption or a commercial exemption the burden would be within the same class. Is it a different process for Open Space?

Mr. Laramie stated that it is part of the residential class and they would bear the burden of the tax shift.

Councilor Gilday stated that every year we vote the exact same way but Councilor Lennon raises a good point. Is there any special sizing limit or minimum that someone would need to be mindful of in seeking an open space discount?

Mr. Laramie stated that he does not have an answer for that but will look into it and get that information.

Councilor Stanganelli mentioned that Ms. Caswell is also here from the Board of Assessors.

Ms. Caswell stated that because it has never been presented she doesn't have any information to share but will certainly look into it and get that information.

Councilor Einson stated that he thanked Councilor Lennon for bringing this forward.

CFO, Angel Wills stated that she agrees this is a great point and feels that the Assessor should work with the next Council on this so that when it comes up next year they will have all the information they will need to adopt or not adopt.

Councilor Wheeler stated that he does not have a question but wanted to thank Ms. Wills for her service as we did with Mr. Fahey as they just found out today that she will be moving on as well.

Ms. Wills thanked the Council.

**A Roll call vote was taken and it was voted in favor (5) Hogg, Mandeville, Wheeler, Gilday and Einson
Opposed (4) Kisielecki, Lennon, Rinaldi and Stanganelli – Motion passes**

Item 3- Residential Exemption – not adopt

Councilor Stanganelli moved to approve the Assessors recommendation to not adopt.

Councilor Wheeler seconded.

Roll Call vote was taken and it was voted in favor Unanimous

Item 4- Commercial Exemption – not adopt

Councilor Stanganelli moved to approve the Assessors recommendation to not adopt.

Councilor Hogg seconded.

Roll call vote was taken and it was voted in favor Unanimous.

Councilor Einson noted that they have a revised letter in front of them that they just received today and there are differences. He asked for someone to explain the differences.

Mr. Laramie stated that there was a change in the levy on Gateway and that changed the numbers and changed the tax rate.

Councilor Stanganelli moved to accept 2021-148 as presented.
Councilor Rinaldi seconded.
Roll call vote was taken and it was voted in favor Unanimous

2021-152 An Order to authorize the Mayor to enter into a memorandum of agreement with the Town of West Newbury to administer Covid-19 vaccine clinics – Mayor sponsor

Summary: The City of Amesbury is acting as the fiduciary agent for the Lower Merrimac Valley Regional Collaboration (LMVRC) which is operating Covid-19 vaccine clinics in Amesbury and surrounding communities. The Town of West Newbury which is also operating clinics asked for a memorandum of agreement with the City of Amesbury to define the nature and scope of reimbursement to the LMVRC communities. M.G.L. Chapter 40 § 4A requires the City Council approval of such agreement.

Councilor Einson stated that at the last meeting they voted to expedite this and therefore not send it to committee for referral but to just suspend that requirement and go directly to a public hearing. He asked if there was any information as to what reimbursements were being reimbursed to whom.

Mr. Fahey stated that they had a conversation with a number of communities that wanted to be in the consortium and a couple stepped up with Amesbury being the primary one but we agreed to be the Fiduciary Agent. They have a verbal agreement which essentially we knew we would be receiving insurance revenue as you know we did get insurance information for folks for the administration of the vaccine not the vaccine itself. That information was collected and submitted to the state for reimbursement. We knew we were going to be getting a pretty significant amount of revenue. As the Fiduciary Agent we said that Amesbury would take 10% of that revenue to basically cover our administration of the district and everything associated with that. We would get reimbursed as would all of the member communities for any expenses incurred in putting on those clinics. Those were primarily going to be from Amesbury and West Newbury, and that essentially if there was going to be any extra revenue that had been collected for that sole purpose, the agreement was that we would return any excess revenue if there were such to all of the communities within the district. That was the approach we took. We had very successful clinics as you know. We did have inquiries from the Administrator of the Town of West Newbury or his Select Board and there was some concern about getting it into a formal agreement. There has been a significant delay in getting those funds from the state and he speculates that West Newbury is starting to get nervous as they did expend costs and were expecting to get some revenue but haven't gotten it yet. Both communities are represented by KP Law and KP Law drafted an agreement based on those principles. That is what you have in front of you now. Any specific details of the agreement he would have to defer to either Chief Berkenbush or Angel.

Councilor Stanganelli questioned if a figure of approximately \$240,000 which was given to them possibly at the budget hearings, if that was part of this.

Chief Berkenbush stated that was part of the overall plan that those moneys are included in this. If we get what we anticipate that would be part of it.

Ms. Wills stated that they have received approximately \$260,000 this week and expect a couple more payments.

Chief Berkenbush stated that they expect another substantial payment prior to the holidays and then a cleanup in early 2022.

Ms. Wills stated that this money would not show in the General Fund. All of these revenues are in a special revenues fund. She stated that we have incurred approximately \$460,000 in expenses and she is not sure if it includes all the billings from the other communities. She stated that they certainly have not paid any of the other communities until we have at least paid all of our expenses. She stated that should happen shortly and once we receive all of the revenues from the state then they can move forward and reconcile and distribute any surplus to the other communities.

Councilor Einson opened and closed the public hearing.

Councilor Stanganelli moved to accept as presented.

Councilor Gilday seconded.

Roll call vote was taken and it was voted in favor (8) Abstained (1) Wheeler – Motion passes.

Councilor Lennon moved to adjourn at 8:07pm

Councilor Stanganelli seconded.

Roll call vote was taken and it was voted in favor (8) Objected (1) Kisielecki

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Dunning
Assistant City Clerk